



RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK, ACTON

Acton Recreation Commission
Meeting Minutes
Room 121
Acton Town Hall
November 2, 2010

Call to Order

Ms. Karen Jarsky, Co-Chair, called meeting to order at 7:00PM. The following attendees were present: Ms. Cathy Fochtman, Recreation Director, Ms. Karen Jarsky, Co-Chair, Ms. Kim Bodnar, Co-Chair, Ms. Betsy Mercier, Commission Member, Ms. Bridget McKeever-Matz, Commission Member.

Consent Agenda

Motion to accept October 2010 minutes as amended, passed 4-0.

Citizens Concern

Ms. Fochtman received a citizens concern regarding ticketing by the Acton Police Department for illegal parking on Quarry Road. Vehicle owners were attending ABYB micro soccer at NARA Park. The citizen expressed her concern as to how and why the Town could operate programs effectively with insufficient parking. Ms. Fochtman responded by stating there was insufficient access for emergency vehicles to access NARA; this was the reasoning for the ticketing. Additionally, new signage was placed along Quarry Road this summer which posts, "No Parking. Violators will be subject to ticketing". Ms. Fochtman agreed, there is a need for additional parking in the upper lot.

Action Item

Ms. Fochtman emailed detailed instructions to the ABYS organization about the parking situation at NARA. Currently there is a proposal for a capital item for the upcoming fiscal year for additional parking to be constructed however this proposal needs to be approved by the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Fochtman stated there is ample parking available at the bathhouse location. Ms. Bodnar remarked walking from the bathhouse to the upper lots is a difficult walk for young children.

Playground Update

Ms. Fochtman reported the short term playground updating goals have been met at both the Goward and Jones Playgrounds. The Goward playground updates consisted of loam replacement and resurfacing. Salt march hay was added to areas currently growing grass. Replacement straps for all handicap swings have been ordered. Playground signage, a suspended tire bridge and a cable climber have been installed as well. A rubber tile was replaced on the slide landing area. The Jones Field safety netting has been replaced. The prior net was installed during the year 1999. The total of the short term goals for Jones Field and Goward Playground were funded directly from Recreational funds and reached over \$11,000. Monies collected for NARA rentals was the source of the funding. Ms. Bodnar asked if legal counsel has been contacted about meeting with a citizen fundraising group lead by Ms. Jana Cataldo. Ms. Fochtman responded the Town Manager has approved Recreation meeting with legal counsel to discuss how to arrange for the citizen group of volunteers to approach raising funds for playground updates. Ms. Fochtman explained this is a multi-year process and is glad to see movement by the citizens in organizing this group. It is important for the Board of Selectmen to see the need and importance of the playground updates being addressed directly by the citizens. Recreation does not have departmental funding to dedicate monies to playground replacement at the level which is needed.

Community Preservation Act (CPA) Liaison

Ms. Fochtman explained how CPA funding is obtained. The Town of Acton raises taxes on an annual basis which is then matched by the State of Massachusetts. These monies are then set aside and are distributed as "grants". These grants are then applied for by Town Departments and citizens for the areas of historic preservation, affordable housing and open space purchase and recreational use. CPC has been a great resource for the Recreation department however CPC funds are not currently available due to the Seidman vs. City of Newton, MA legal decision. The CPC committee requires a member of the Recreation Commission to act as a liaison and attend meetings. Town Counsel is also involved as they need to ensure legal issues do not arise. Our committee needs to provide a liaison.

Action Item

Ms. Fochtman will explore the option with Town Planner, Roland Bartl of two Recreation Commissioners splitting the liaison position and responsibilities.

Open Space and Recreation Plan Modifications (OSRP)

Ms. Fochtman informed Commissioners the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) dated 2002 through 2007 requires updating. This document provides information as to how Recreation's needs and planning have progressed. Ms. Jarsky inquired if the plan was a requirement in order to receive funding, if so, should the plan be written in a particular manner? Ms. Fochtman replied, yes, the current needs should be clearly described; goals and objectives outlined to fulfill each.

Action Item

Ms. Fochtman will provide updates of the current playground inventory and will contact the liaison of the Conservation Commission regarding the timeline of the updates for this document. Ms. Fochtman will also provide Commissioners a copy of the memo which was sent to the Board of Selectmen during the month of October 2009. Intermunicipal agreements will be included along with a proposed note to send to all the league directors asking for their input. Ms. Fochtman will contact the Acton Public School liaison regarding an inventory of the school playgrounds. After reviewing with the Town Clerk, Ms. Getsick will fulfill the requirements for posting a public meeting announcement by the Commissioners to update the OSRP documents during a mid-November meeting of the Commission.

New Business/Discussion

Parking signs at the T.J. O'Grady Skate Park will be replaced. Graffiti removal will be attempted with trial projects offered by the Highway Department.



**RECREATION COMMISSION
AGENDA
November 2, 2010
Room 126
7:00 PM
Acton Town Hall, Acton, MA**

Running time approximate

- 1) 7:00 PM Call Meeting to Order
- 2) 7:05 PM Citizen Concerns
- *Sports Field Parking*
- 3) 7:15 PM Consent Agenda
- *Acceptance of October 5, 2010 Minutes*
- 4) 7:20 PM Playground Update
- 5) 7:30 PM CPA Liaison
- 6) 7:35 PM Open Space and Recreation Plan Modifications
- 7) 8:25 PM New Business/Discussion

Upcoming Recreation Commission Meetings

Date	Time	Comments/Agenda Items:
December 7 2010	7:00 PM Room 126	
January 4, 2011	7:00 PM Room 126	
February 8, 2011	7:00 PM Room 126	

**PLEASE CONTACT THE RECREATION DEPARTMENT
IF YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO ATTEND THE MEETING
Email RECREATION@ACTON-MA.GOV or Call (978) 929.6640**

Goals and Objectives

The Recreation Commission made the following recommendations. They were in agreement that the three goals, 1) Preserve the remaining elements of Acton's rural character, 2) Environmental protection, 3) Improve recreational opportunities remain as stated. They recommended that the following objectives (new items are bold) be revised under goal 3:

- a) **Playground facilities are made up-to-date, safe and accessible.**
- b) **Enhance the quality of Acton's athletic fields through improved maintenance techniques.**
- c) Provide additional athletic fields to meet the needs of the town's growing population.
- d) Ensure handicapped accessibility is available for recreational activities (e.g. trails, picnicking, water-based recreation and camping) at both recreational and conservation areas.
- e) Enhance possibilities for hiking, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding, boating and fishing on conservation lands. Expand public outreach to better inform the public of our available passive recreation opportunities.
- f) Promote the development of the two regional bike trails planned to run through Acton.
- g) Encourage regional planning with abutting towns in order to create more expansive human (see 3b above) and wildlife (see 2b above) corridors.

Section 12 Appendix L - Recreation Five Year Plan

Note: These plans augment the information provided in Section 9, Action Recommendation #14.

Listed below are the Recreation Department's plans for improvement to our existing athletic fields. Refer to Section 9 for plans for NARA and the School Street Fields.

1, JONES FIELD

During the next five years the Jones Field fencing will be replaced in the outfield and the backstop areas. Removal of the pea stone surface, at the playground, and replacement with the wood safety fiber will allow greater handicapped access to this play structure. Continued focus will be given to improve field maintenance and address infield issues.

2. WOODLAWN FIELD

Over the course of the next five years the land use lease agreement between the Recreation Department and the Cemetery Commission will have to be addressed. In addition, plans are underway to improve the parking lot, including regrading the site and replacing existing gravel.

3. HART FIELD

Over the next five years the Recreation Department will address drainage issues on the left side of this field. The work needed to correct this problem will be handled by town staff and will require an EPA permit. In addition, benches, outfield fences and the backstop will be replaced. Spectator bleachers will be installed as will a safe "bull-pen" area for players.

4. MACPHERSON FIELD

In the next five years, new bleachers, outfield fences, benches, and a new backstop will be installed. The Recreation Department will investigate field lighting and the addition of an electric scoreboard..

5. GREAT HILL and #9. Little Great Hill

During the next five years the playground at Great Hill needs to be replaced and an appropriate wood fiber safety surface needs to be put in place. In addition, this site would benefit from improved handicapped access to walking paths around the pond and the establishment of more picnic locations..

6. ELM STREET FIELD

Improvements will continue to be made at the Elm Street field over the next 5 years. The infield will be replaced by spring 2002 in order to address drainage issues. The outfield fencing at this field is in desperate need of replacement as is the existing lighting. Plans are underway to resurface the parking area and to provide handicap accessibility to the picnic pavilion area.

7. 2A/27 – VETERANS MEMORIAL FIELD

During the next five years the Town must address the lack of adequate parking at this site. General improvements should include more handicap accessible areas, more seating areas, and replacement of the pea stone surfacing at the playground with wood safety fiber. Priority items are to install a warming track in the outfield and increase field maintenance. Priority must also be given to the connection of this site to the future BFBP, as this may ease some of the parking issues. It is hoped that these fields will be considered in the design requirements of any new fire department building proposed for the adjacent site. The inclusion of a snack bar, storage area and public restrooms in that facility would benefit all who use these fields..

10. GOWARD PLAYGROUND

Due to the high traffic volume this playground receives, replacement of this piece of equipment is inevitable during the next five years. While once a premier play structure, wooden playgrounds are under increasing scrutiny with regards to safety and health related issues. In addition, replacement of the pea stone surfacing with wood safety fiber will improve handicap access and provide a safer play area.

11. GARDNER PLAYGROUND

The next five years will focus largely on parking issues for this site. The recreation department will be working closely with the Acton Water District to create a parking lot adjacent to this field on a parcel of water district property. The remaining pea stone surfacing at the playground will also be removed and replaced with wood safety fiber surfacing to provide greater handicap access to this playground. In addition the recreation department will investigate the installation of a lit basketball court to provide a court for adult-based recreation programs. Shade trees will also be added to improve sun protection at this site.

Section 1 – Plan Summary: Lists initiatives, major accomplishments, and projects underway.

SECTION 1 - PLAN SUMMARY

In the past five years, Acton has implemented many of the action recommendations contained in the previous Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) with the greatest strides made in the areas of active and passive recreation. Although much work remains to improve recreational opportunities in Acton, our biggest challenge in the next five years lies in our ability to preserve Acton's character and to protect the environment, most notably our water supply.

In this plan update, we have reexamined our previous goals and revised our objectives to reflect: the accomplishments of the past five years; the problems we now face; and the needs of residents as expressed in the 1998 Master Plan Update, as well as the 2001 OSRP Survey. Our overall goals remain the same as those set in the last plan:

Goal 1: Preserve the remaining elements of Acton's rural character

Goal 2: Protect the environment

Goal 3: Improve recreational opportunities

The previous OSRP was completed at a time when many Acton residents were feeling the benefits of a booming economy. Approval of funds to develop the North Acton Recreation Area (NARA), and purchase of the Morrison Farm and Boy Scout land all occurred during this time. The growth in school population, and the popularity of sports among young people made recreation a value nearly everyone in Acton could understand and support. For those reasons, the previous OSRP became a powerful document for focusing public efforts on open space and recreation.

Since that time, and in part because of the OSRP, Acton has seen a gratifying increase in its human infrastructure, both in town government and in the many individuals motivated to work together, volunteering their time to improve resources for the town and, in many cases, for the region. In the last five years: Acton has put in place a new Recreation Department and Recreation Commission; the Acton Conservation Trust, a private non-profit organization, has refocused its mission to become a land trust; the Acton Stream Teams have become an active group; and there is an Environmental Manager at the Acton Water District. The Friends of the Acton Arboretum, a private non-profit organization, continues to improve that unique park. One of the busiest and most productive of all groups, the Land Stewardship Committee (LSCom), a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission, has provided consistent, first-rate management for Acton's conservation lands and has made huge strides in improving public access to these lands.

Overview of Five-Year Action Plan

The growing, powerful public interest in open space and recreation, and the constraints we face in addressing the public's needs, have shaped the actions we recommend in this plan.

As part of this plan, nearly every significant parcel of open space has been reviewed and its value as recreation or open space established. Although this is a huge step forward from the last plan, it is not enough. Aggressive actions must now be taken to preserve these lands, to protect our natural resources, especially our water supply, and to ensure recreational opportunities keep pace with the needs of our growing population.

At present Acton has a town-sponsored Economic Development Committee (EDC) whose mission is to advise the Board of Selectmen on issues related to economic development, but there is no formal town entity charged with the same role for open space protection. This plan presents fifteen specific actions to accomplish our three OSR goals; many of these actions are tied to the creation of a permanent OSR Committee charged with advising the Selectmen and advocating for open space and recreation issues.

Acton's human infrastructure—the dozen or more groups (largely volunteer) working to protect the environment, to maintain open space and its values, and to encourage active and passive recreation—are a formidable resource whose efforts underpin this plan. To keep these groups, the town boards and the general public, informed of the progress in implementing this plan, the OSR Committee should remain active, reporting to the public on a yearly basis gains and losses. In addition, this plan recommends measures the OSR Committee must take to:

- Evaluate open space preservation opportunities and act as an advocate to Town boards
- Serve as an advocate for Acton's farms
- Develop a policy to ensure that the OSR Committee is informed of potential changes of use for prioritized parcels
- Advocate for zoning changes to mitigate and control growth

Despite our OSRP survey results that showed that a majority of residents say they want to protect open space with purchase, if necessary, Acton still has lost major parcels to development. Acton needs alternative ways to purchase or legally protect open space from development. Approval of the Community Preservation Act would help provide a source of funding for ongoing land protection. Should passage of the CPA fail at the November 2002 ballot vote, the OSR Committee must place a high priority on developing other funding options, such as including an annual budget line item for open space and recreation land purchases. In addition, the Committee should work with the Acton Conservation Trust, as well as other area land trusts, in order to further their work in obtaining conservation restrictions on prioritized parcels.

Acton's greatest environmental problem, water, is the frame in which our future will take place. Although summer watering bans have been in place for years, the current water supply will support little new development of any kind, according to Acton's Water

District. A town wide planning effort must be undertaken in the area of water supply protection, and further controls on outdoor summer water use must be implemented as soon as possible.

Acton is like many Massachusetts towns in that industrial activities of previous decades have left an unfortunate legacy of contaminated groundwater. Although Superfund designation of the former W.R. Grace site in South Acton has leveraged a massive cleanup program, contamination of Acton's groundwater remains. Smaller 21E sites have created "hot spots" of soil and water contamination within town and non-point pollution from residential developments has exacerbated eutrophication in Acton's surface water bodies.

Acton's greatest successes in the past five years have been in the area of active and passive recreation. The opening of NARA, the Recreation Department's many field improvements in other parts of town and the Land Stewardship Committee's (LSCom) numerous projects to improve public access to our conservation lands have all contributed to vastly expand Acton's recreational opportunities.

In the next five years, the town's recreation offerings must keep pace with growth in the school population and address the need for bicycle paths and additional hiking/cross-country ski trails preferred by those responding to the Open Space and Recreation Survey. The Recreation Department's five-year plan addresses the need to improve existing recreation facilities and develop new recreation sites and fields. As part of this plan, funds will be sought for the final design and construction of athletic fields at the Morrison Farm. In addition, plans are underway to procure land, finalize design plans and construct the T.J. O'Grady Memorial Skate Park.

Acton is participating in the area's efforts to develop two regional bike paths; the Assabet River Rail Trail (ARRT) and the Bruce N. Freeman Memorial Bicycle Path (BFBP). The Planning Department had submitted an article for the 2002 town meeting to fund Acton's 1.1 mile portion of the ARRT, but due to budget constraints this article was not included on the final warrant. This may be brought up again in 2003. The ARRT is planned as a multi-use recreational rail trail that will pass through the communities of Marlborough, Hudson, Stow, Maynard and Acton, with a terminus adjacent to the South Acton train station.

Acton's current five-year plan for the BFBP includes a feasibility study, trail survey, and grant research to position Acton for available funding for construction of the trail. The BFBP is planned as a multi-use rail trail running from Sudbury to Lowell. Acton's portion of this trail, traversing a distance of 4.5 miles, will provide a path running from the Morrison Farm/Ice House Pond in East Acton to NARA Park in North Acton, and will touch points on the Isaac Davis Trail, the Route 2A/27 Little League complex, and the Nashoba Brook Conservation Area.

The LSCom's five-year plan focuses on public outreach and inter-town trail connections. The plan includes further work on their website, publication of a greatly improved Guide to Conservation Lands, increased publicity concerning LSCom activities, introduction of educational programs into the schools, some town wide projects such as vernal pool certification, and both intra-town connectors between parcels, where possible, and inter-town connectors to conservation lands in several of the contiguous towns where these lie just across the boundary. Since the OSR Survey respondents placed a high value on hiking paths and cross-country ski trails, funding for the ongoing publication of the Guide is recommended as part of this OSR plan update.

Section 5B3 – Athletic Fields and Town Playgrounds

3. Athletic Fields and Town Playgrounds

Athletic Fields

The Town of Acton provides approximately 29 acres of town-owned athletic fields, in addition to the facilities provided by the local and regional schools that are frequently used for non-school activities. The location, sizes, and most common uses of these fields are shown below. Most areas are suited for a variety of athletic uses, with some areas capable of supporting multiple simultaneous uses. Recreation needs for more athletic fields are discussed in detail in Section 7B. The Recreation Department's comprehensive five-year plan is presented in Section 9.

Ref. #	Field Name	Acreage	Playground	Field Uses
1.	Jones Field	3	Yes	Baseball/Soccer
2.	Woodlawn Field	2	No	Soccer
3.	Hart Field	2	No	Baseball
4.	MacPherson	1	No	Baseball
5.	Great Hill	2.5	Yes	Soccer
6.	Elm Street Field	2	Yes	Softball/Football/Tennis/Soccer
7.	2A/27	2	Yes	2 Baseball
8.	School Street	4	No	3 Soccer
9.	Little Great Hill Field	.5	No	Soccer
10.	Goward Field (behind the Library)	1.69	Yes	None
11.	Gardner Field	1.6	Yes	Field closed in 2000 due to lack of parking
12.	NARA	6.5	No	Softball/3 Soccer
	Total Acreage	28.79		

Maintenance of the town athletic fields is the responsibility of the Recreation/Natural Resources Department. Field scheduling is the responsibility of the Recreation Department. In 1999, the town reinstated routine trash removal at the fields. The town provides weekly mowing for the athletic fields and annual aeration. Fields are fertilized using funds accumulated from field reservations or donations from the leagues.

In addition to the athletic league use of fields, many community groups and companies reserve the athletic areas for games and picnics. Athletic fields, and their associated picnic and playground areas, are also intensively used by families and groups of children.

Overview of Field Problems

Jones Field and Great Hill Field are often too wet in the spring to be playable. In 2000 Gardner field was taken offline due to parking issues. Goward, Hart, MacPherson and Little Great Hill fields are all limited in their utility due to their size and geometry. In each case, only certain levels of play are possible. The difficulty of parking near some of the fields makes them less desirable for their targeted age groups as the very young players are required to walk on the side of, or across, busy town streets.

Due to budget restraints, maintenance of athletic fields has become a problem. The town has limited lining of athletic fields, and in recent years the leagues have had to provide their own silt or stone mix and amenities. Youth Soccer also frequently re-sods worn areas of fields. The leagues that use our illuminated fields at Elm Street and 2A/27 provide their own funding for lights.

Field Descriptions

1, JONES FIELD

The focus on Jones Field during the past five years has been to address safety issues. To that end, in 1999, the Recreation Department placed a large safety net between the ball field and playground area to prevent balls hitting children while they are using the play structures. In addition, infield improvements have been made and new bleachers installed to replace the ones that did not meet safety codes.

2. WOODLAWN FIELD

Woodlawn Field is leased under a ten-year agreement (due to expire in 2002) from the Cemetery Commission, and eventually will be used for burial purposes.

This field has undergone some turf maintenance over the past five years in an effort to produce a more stable playing surface. Installation of an irrigation system and resodding of high traffic areas has produced a field that can withstand the daily demands placed upon it. In recent winters the Recreation Department has created two large skating rinks on the field.

3. HART FIELD

During the past five years routine maintenance has taken place at Hart Field.

4. MACPHERSON FIELD

Routine maintenance has been the focus at this field during the past 5 years. In 2001 an emergency call box was placed at this field and major improvements to the roadway leading to the field have been completed. This has allowed for better access to the field for vehicles and pedestrian traffic.

5. GREAT HILL FIELD AND #9. LITTLE GREAT HILL FIELD

In the past five years the Recreation Department has brought Little Great Hill online and completed a boardwalk connecting this field to the parking lot. Field use was studied and a determination was made to eliminate the Little League field and increase the soccer field area at the Great Hill site. In addition the parking lot was resurfaced.

6. ELM STREET FIELD

Elm Street Field has undergone a major renovation project during the past five years. The playground has been repaired, wood safety fiber surfacing has been added and dangerous equipment has either been replaced or removed. The playground was also reoriented to the site to accommodate the addition of a small size soccer field. The tennis court area has been completely redone, including new fencing, court surfacing, new nets and a new practice backboard. The softball field has seen the replacement of backstop and player fencing areas. In addition new bleachers were provided as well as permanent team benches. Some electrical work was also done at this site to ensure the safe use of the field lights.

7. 2A/27 – VETERANS MEMORIAL FIELD

During the past five years the field at 2A/27 has undergone a dramatic renovation process. What once was a soccer/little league field has now turned into a fabulous double Little League complex complete with our own “Green Monster”. The renovation of this field included the addition of two Little League fields, lighting, scoreboards, fencing, starting up the irrigation system, seating areas and handicapped access. The space is now a highly utilized area.

8. SCHOOL STREET

This site contains a heavily used soccer field, although in the past five years little has been done to maintain the field, as the site is under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Corrections System. This field is on a ten-year lease from the Department of Corrections, in return for that agency’s use of 25 acres of the Wetherbee Conservation Land. These fields are difficult to keep in playable condition because the soil is sandy with a gravel base and does not retain water. The proximity of the fields to Acton Water District wells (at 315 School Street and Lawsbrook Road) and an aeration tower restricts the Town or the sports leagues from irrigating the fields. The fields must be “rested” as much as field demand allows in order to retain a minimum amount of vegetation.

10. GOWARD PLAYGROUND

In 1993 the Acton Children’s Playground Committee, Inc., a citizen’s group, successfully raised funds and used town and citizen labor to create a playground geared for ages 1-6 at Goward Field. This was a preliminary response to the Master Plan objective to “provide recreational opportunities for young children.” In 1999, surfacing upgrades were made at this playground to improve handicapped access and increase safety.

In the last five years, many renovations have been made to the playground at Goward Field, due in large part, to the library renovation project. In the past five years attempts have been made to provide better handicap access to the play equipment. In addition safety issues concerning outdated equipment and fall zones have been addressed and resolved. The basketball court has also been improved to provide a small play area.

11. GARDNER PLAYGROUND

Over the past five years attempts have been made to improve the access to this neighborhood playground. Due to the popularity of this playground, access issues have become paramount. To address some of the parking concerns, all soccer games and practices were restricted from this field two years ago. In 2001 two new play structures were installed complete with handicapped accessible wood safety fiber surfacing.

12. NARA FIELDS

Refer to Section 5B5 for a detailed description of all of the amenities at NARA Park. In 1999 the NARA Park fields were brought online. The 6.5 acres of fields contain one softball diamond and two full size soccer fields. Two 500-foot deep bedrock wells were drilled to provide field irrigation. A controlled fertilizer program is used to mitigate fertilizer contamination of the pond and wetlands.

The NARA fields are used quite extensively. On any given Saturday, the two soccer fields are broken down into five or six play areas in order to allow multiple teams to practice simultaneously. The Acton Boxborough Regional High School cross country program also uses the fields in the fall of each year.

Section 5B4 – School Playgrounds

4. School Department Land

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District owns 66.6 acres of land, and the Acton School District controls (the land is under town ownership) 121.77 acres of land. Although there are buildings on almost all of these properties, the school campuses and grounds provide valuable open space.

One parcel of School Department land is not associated with an actual school building and holds value as open space. This parcel is located on Arlington Street, north of Route 2, and is 24.92 acres in size (Town Atlas E-3, Parcel 8). This land was acquired in 1962 as a potential school site, although the soils were unsuitable for construction.

SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS

Conant School

Gates School

Douglas School

McCarthy-Towne School

Merriam School

LOCATIONS

Taylor Road

Spruce Street

Elm Street

Massachusetts Avenue

Charter Road

Section 5B5 – Water Based Recreation

5. Water Based Recreation

This section provides a review of the water-based recreation areas in Acton. In the last five years, the major accomplishment in improving water-based recreation was the opening of NARA Park, which includes a 9-acre pond and beach, further described below. Other small water-based recreation areas exist in town.

NARA PARK

NARA Park opened to the public in the spring of 2000. This 40-acre outdoor recreation area is home to 6.5 acres of softball/soccer fields, a 2,000-seat amphitheater, a playground, walking trails, a 500 foot long bathing beach with a swimming area, and a bathhouse complete with snack bar. This area is a hot bed of activity during the summer months. Programs include beach operations, the NARA Youth Summer Program, free outdoor summer concert series, recreation and league sponsored athletic events, and the annual July 4th celebration. NARA Park beach provides the only public swimming area in town and serves over 600 resident families each season. NARA is also home to many special events each year; annual Halloween Costume Contest, Winterfest, Acton Day and Spring Treasure Hunt; sponsored by the Acton Recreation Department. Many individuals and companies also use NARA for large functions and field rentals.

GREAT HILL RECREATION AREA SKATING POND

The pond is a 3/4 acre impoundment created by excavating an old, silted-up farm pond that was reverting into a red maple swamp. Completed in 1986, the pond is used for skating, fishing and wildlife viewing.

MILL POND RECREATION AREA

This half-acre site is located between Main Street and the Fort Pond Brook Mill Pond, above the 1848 stone dam near the site of Faulkner Mills. The site has a half-acre of grass, and is open to the water for fishing and related activities. This area's use is somewhat limited by lack of on-site parking. Also the condition of the privately owned stone dam is an issue. Eventual completion of the ARRT near this site will improve access. This location also houses a pumping facility for Acton's new wastewater treatment system.

ROBBINS MILL POND

This is a man-made impoundment in the Nashoba Brook Conservation Area. The pond, approximately three acres in size, is the site of mill foundations and an earth fill dam that dates back to pre-Colonial times. In 1990, the town, using funds for materials donated by the Acton Conservation Trust, rebuilt the dam extensively. The restored impoundment is suitable for fishing, canoeing, and wildlife study. Additional reconstruction was undertaken in 1995, utilizing an eight-man crew from the Northeastern Correctional Facility in Concord.

GRASSY POND

The boardwalks and trails leading to Grassy Pond, in the Grassy Pond Conservation Area, provide access into the pond for fishing, canoeing and wildlife study. This large pond covers about 20 acres.

ARBORETUM POND

A 4,000 square foot pond was excavated at the Arboretum in 1991. This small pond provides an open water habitat for birds and other wildlife that reside in, or migrate through, the Arboretum.

ARBORETUM BOG BOARDWALK

There is a 100 yard long boardwalk across the quaking bog located at the Arboretum. This boardwalk, which includes an observation bench, allows close study of bog plants and related wildlife. Many elementary classes study the bog and its inhabitants each year during outings hosted by the Natural Resources Department.

WILL'S HOLE BOG BOARDWALK

The boardwalk into Will's Hole, a kettle hole pond and associated quaking bog, provides safe access to the pond for wildlife and plant observation.

ICE HOUSE POND

This is a four-acre impoundment of Nashoba Brook, located on town-owned land at the intersection of Concord Road and Great Road. Since management activities (including yearly draining) related to ice harvesting stopped in the 1950s, the pond was very rapidly filling with floating and emergent vegetation that cut into the recreational potential of the site. In 1995 the pond was de-watered and dredged to restore its value as a boating and fishing area. Because of the proximity of the parking area to the water's edge, this site has the potential for handicapped access for water recreation.

SANDY POND

In 1988, a contractor dredged a two-acre pond located near Sandy Drive (off of School Street) that is located on town conservation land. This impoundment is publicly accessible for fishing and nature study.

Section 5B8 – Town Owned Lands (Morrison Farm)

8. Town-Owned Lands

ACTON

Of the various parcels owned by the town, three parcels totaling 44 acres hold value as open space.

The town purchased the 32-acre Morrison Farm in 1997 (funded in large part by a \$1.3 million debt-exclusion override), as General Municipal Property, with plans for turning the open areas into ball fields and placing trails (some of which already exist) in the forested area. This farm was listed in the previous OSRP as one of our top parcels for protection. Refer to Section 9 for a description of the Town's plans to install fields on this property and connect the trail system to the future BFBP.

The Town also owns a two acre parcel and a ten acre parcel, both on Stow Street, that are important to preserve as open space. The smaller parcel would provide a connection to the Town of Stow's conservation land. The larger Stow street parcel is part of the Fort Pond Brook greenbelt and contains much floodplain and wetlands.

CONCORD

The Town of Concord owns 58 acres in Acton; this land abuts Nagog Pond, one of Concord's principal water supplies. This land provides a significant wildlife corridor, greatly contributes to the rural character of that part of Town, and has both active and passive recreation potential. If Concord should ever change its use of this property, Acton should seek to protect this land from development.

Section 5B11 – State Owned Lands (Skateboard Park)

11. State-Owned Lands

The state owns 202 acres of land in Acton, 159 acres of which has been identified as land having high conservation and/or recreation value (see Appendix J). The state-owned land falls into four major categories of open space: land that is part of the Department of Corrections Farm (about 100 acres containing active farm fields), a 16 acre parcel containing the State Police horse barn and fields, parcels that were taken when Route 2 was built but that lie outside of the actual right-of-way, and the Whittier land (25 acres) under the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife.

The Correction Department land is very significant to the town, due to the fact that the open fields abutting Route 2 add a great deal to Acton's rural image. If these lands ever were to be disposed of, the town would consider them as a high priority purchase, as it did when given the opportunity to buy the Route 2 Conservation Area (now the Wetherbee Conservation Area – see Section 5B1 #15) from the state in the early eighties. Part of that parcel is now leased back to the state for agricultural purposes.

The town is now in the process of trying to secure surplus state highway land near Route 2 to develop it into a skateboard park (see Section 5A2).

LAND OWNED BY THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

PLATE	PARCEL	LOCATION	TITLE	ACQUISITION	ACRES
C-5	089	066-070 Harris Street	8181/354	1953	1.40
	090-02	066R Harris Street	10928/156	1965	.50
E-3	081	060R Washington Drive	7866/367	1952	3.98
	085	083R Charter Road	7866/367	1950	3.00
	093	065R Hayward Road	7650/311	1950	4.90
E-4	003	Whittier land - Main Street		1995	25.0
F-3	016	068 Hayward Road	7653/328	1950	1.00
	016-01	068 Hayward Road	7653/328	1950	.33
	090	349R Main Street	unknown	unknown	2.50
G-3	012	332-338 Mass Ave.	12449/652	1973	1.00
G-4	176	099 Mass Ave.	11703/603	1969	2.22
	184	060 Hosmer Street	12717/213	1974	.92
	185	135-139 Mass Ave.	12731/213	1974	.78
	187	105-125 Mass Ave.	unknown	unknown	4.00
	197	070-088 Hosmer Street	7751/053	1951	13.00
	198	092-126 Mass Ave.	unknown	unknown	21.00
	209	058-076 Wetherbee Street	unknown	unknown	16.00
G-5	095	066R Wetherbee Street	unknown	unknown	4.60
	096	end Keefe Road	unknown	unknown	1.10
H-3	A38	5 River St. and rear	unknown	unknown	3.00
H-4	005	320-346 School Street	unknown	unknown	42.00
	006	323-347 School Street	unknown	unknown	50.00

Total Acres	202.23
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Section 6B – Goal #3, Improved Recreational Opportunities

3. Improve Recreational Opportunities

Clearly, when evaluating the progress made for our three OSR goals from the last plan, the actions taken towards the goal of improving recreation opportunities have met with the most success.

During the last five years, the Land Stewardship Committee, an all-volunteer sub-committee of the Conscom, has completed over 145 projects on the town's conservation lands, resulting in vastly enhanced access to these lands. The LSCom work is described in Section 5.

With respect to active recreation, the Recreation Commission was reactivated in 1996, as was the Recreation Department, headed by Nancy McShea and under the direction of Tom Tidman, Director of Natural Resources. The most dramatic development in this area has been the 1999 opening of NARA Park, a 40-acre community park, located in North Acton. This park, run by the Recreation Department, has been a tremendous success. A complete description is provided in Section 5.

The Recreation Department, over the past five years, has done much more than bring NARA on-line. As reviewed in detail in Section 5, much work has been done in field enhancement at other sites in town and two fields have undergone major renovations.

In the OSR survey, residents were asked to cite the top five recreational facilities most needed in Acton. Bike trails were the overwhelming top preference, followed by conservation areas and hiking/skiing trails. Although athletic fields were not identified as a top priority in the survey, the Recreation Department and the four youth leagues have identified a strong need, discussed in Section 7, for more playing fields.

Section 7B – Summary of Needs (Recreation Needs, including statements from each athletic league, including addition of LAX)
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B. Summary of Community's Needs

Section 7B addresses the needs of the community with respect to preservation of open space, focusing on passive and active recreation needs.

Open Space and Recreation "Measurement" Standards

Although we used national standards in the last plan, we feel it is more relevant to measure our "progress" over time by calculating the current ratio of conservation and recreation land to Acton's population and comparing it to the same ratio for 1996.

As shown in the land chart found at the beginning of Section 5, Acton currently has 1,583 acres of legally protected open space and 63 acres of town-owned recreation land (not protected but containing athletic fields and other infrastructure). In 1995, we had 1,512.5 acres of legally protected open space and 63 acres of recreation land. The increase of 70.5 acres comes from two CRs and three grants or gifts of conservation land made in connection with cluster or subdivision developments. Based on the 2000 census showing our population to be 20,331, Acton's protected open space ratio is 81 acres per 1,000 residents. In 1996 this ratio would have been 85 acres per 1,000 residents. The decline is due to population increases which have outpaced our ability to preserve a commensurate amount of open space for both conservation and recreation purposes.

In 1995, we had 3.4 acres of recreation space per 1,000 residents. Currently, we have 3.1 acres of recreation space per 1,000 residents. This decline is due to the increased population for the same amount of recreation land (although NARA was not on-line in 1995, that land was part of the recreation land total). The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standard of 10.5 acres of developed recreation land per 1,000 population, means that Acton should currently have 214 acres of active recreation land in use; as stated previously, this is not a realistic measure for us, as it is unlikely we will ever be able to meet this standard.

The Master Plan Update estimates a "most likely" residential build-out of 10,200 units and a total population at build-out of about 29,000 (an increase of about 45% over the latest 2000 figures, although the final build-out is more likely to be 25,000-26,000). In order to preserve our current open space ratio of 81 acres per 1,000 residents, we would need to preserve an additional 702 acres of open space at a build-out population of 29,000. It should be noted that the Morrison Farm, currently in the unprotected category of general municipal property, could be counted towards this goal, if the property was protected and used for conservation and recreation activities. In addition, the 12 acres of town-owned property on Stow Street, discussed in Sections 5A2 and 5B8, could also be counted towards this goal if it is rezoned as conservation land (ARC).

Community needs are discussed below for both passive and active recreation, as well as for handicapped accessibility.

Conservation Needs – Preservation and Passive Recreation

The 1998 Master Plan Update reiterated citizens' desire to maintain the character of the community. The Plan noted that with increasing development activity, the future of our open fields, forested lands, and scenic country roads depends on active preservation efforts. A balanced mixture of homes and businesses clustered in villages and separated by open spaces helps define distinct areas in a community and more efficiently utilizes town resources.

The Master Plan Update conveyed residents' growing concern regarding the rate of residential growth in town and the impact such growth has in the future on the character of the town and the demand for town services (including schools). One goal of the update is to "preserve those elements or features which contribute to Acton's New England town character as a suburban residential community with strong rural and historic roots".

The OSR survey supported the sentiments expressed in the Master Plan Update. Acton's citizens want to preserve open space for conservation needs. In addition, with regards to passive recreation, survey respondents ranked the need for more hiking and skiing trails only second behind their desire for bike paths. Although there is a general sentiment towards preserving more land for conservation, the Town needs to disseminate more information and conduct public outreach about our existing lands.

As can be seen on the Open Space Inventory map in Section 13, conservation lands are located in nearly all sections of town. Our centrally located Acton Arboretum is maintained by the town and Friends of the Acton Arboretum, Inc. which makes it our most "polished" conservation area. The paths are well maintained and marked. There is an adequate parking lot and plenty of benches and picnic tables. As discussed in the Section 504 Self-Evaluation, in the Appendix, the Arboretum has handicapped accessible trails.

We are fortunate to have the LSCom whose members have been working so diligently over the past five years to improve public access to our other conservation lands. The first five years of LSCom activity has been primarily focused on infrastructure issues, so that each of the thirteen conservation areas now actively managed has been improved to the same standard. This includes kiosks with map boxes and entrance signs at all major entrances; a rational trail system within each parcel, usually comprising a loop trail with one or more accesses and secondary trails; upgraded maps, based on DGPS data; and blazes on the trails consistently applied throughout the various conservation areas. Trails have been improved, cut, cleared, and provided with boardwalks, bridges, and wood chips, where needed.

A few details of this first five-year program must still be finished, but the next five-year program is already underway. Its primary focus will be outreach. This will include further work on the LSCom website, publication of a greatly improved Field Guide, increased publicity concerning LSCom activities, introduction of educational programs

into the schools, town wide projects such as vernal pool certification, and both intra-town connectors between parcels where possible and inter-town connectors to conservation lands in several of the contiguous towns where these lie just across the boundary.

Recreation Needs – Active Recreation

NEED FOR BIKE PATHS – SURVEY RESPONDENTS’ TOP PRIORITY

The OSR survey respondents chose bike paths as their top recreation priority. Although Acton is participating in the development of two regional bike paths, the Town currently has no bike paths.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW OF NEEDS

The development of NARA has fulfilled many active recreation needs and the Recreation Department has made much headway in improving our other existing fields, however, there is still a considerable need for more athletic fields and a need for a source of funds to adequately maintain existing fields (refer to Section 5B3 for a detailed discussion of field problems).

Recreational opportunities need to be broadened to include all age groups and interests as well as meet the demanding growth needs of the youth sport organizations. As the population of Acton increases so does the need for new recreational facilities – currently we are unable to meet these demands. We must plan now for both short term and long term solutions to this growth spurt. Fields are being eliminated at the high school, resulting in overloading of fields that currently get no rest periods. It is inevitable that we will outgrow current resources within the next 1-2 years.

Of highest priority is the need to construct a new lighted football field, a full-size baseball field, and two softball fields. This would help meet the current use needs of Youth Football, Youth Baseball, Youth Softball and Adult Softball Leagues. In addition, fields are needed to meet the ever increasing demands of Youth Soccer and Youth Little League. Additional fields would allow the Recreation Department to rest fields and keep safe playable surfaces on existing fields.

Attention must be given to increasing recreational opportunities for all. Paving walking trails at NARA Park, removing pea stone surfacing at playgrounds, replacing outdated play structures at Great Hill, improving access to Ice House Pond for fishing and improving walking paths at the Morrison Farm would enhance handicapped access to these areas. Adult, senior and toddler recreation need to be addressed in the future. Dedicated space should be provided for activities specific to these unique groups. Care must also be given to meet the increasing needs of the non-league recreation groups; this would include development of a hockey facility, ice hockey rink, figure skating area, lighted basketball courts, and some dedicated indoor space or facility. Serious consideration should also be given to developing a teen center to meet the recreational needs of this often-overlooked population.

On a final note, with growth and development also comes the need to provide more natural surroundings and environments. With this in mind future recreational plans should include adequate landscaping and shade structures to ensure both participant and spectator comfort, protection and aesthetic beauty.

ATHLETIC LEAGUE NEEDS

Comments were solicited in 1998 from the major athletic leagues, which represent upwards of 1,200 Acton households, regarding their concerns about the future of the fields. All four leagues expressed a concern that there were only marginally sufficient areas to use presently, and that there would be a need for additional fields in the not too distant future.

In 2001, the Recreation Department asked leagues to submit a statement indicating and justifying the need for more field space in the next five years. Their responses are summarized below.

Acton-Boxborough Youth Soccer - submitted by league president Dave Wilson

“Numbers don’t tell the entire story here. Our registrations are basically flat and have been for a few years in the 1500 to 1700 range, but we still face huge problems for fields. The problems relate to: increasing pressure of adult and club leagues for field requests, the booming lacrosse program, loss of high school fields in the coming 5 years, possible loss of Concord Road in the next 5 years. The School Street lease extension remains a mess/quandary and currently has no standing agreement.”

Acton-Boxborough Youth Softball - submitted by league president Rich Delaney.

“The AB Youth Softball league will have 220 girls and 18 teams this spring (2002). The four softball fields in town (the two Gates fields, Elm Street and NARA) are adequate to meet our needs this spring even when considering that the fields are also used by the school softball teams and the adult recreational softball league. Assuming our program enrollment increases a conservative 5% per year over the next five years, AB Youth Softball will have 280 players and 24 teams five years from now. At that level of enrollment and given the current demand for softball field space from the schools and the adult recreational league, the town would need a fifth softball field to accommodate our peak scheduling needs in the spring season of 2006. The league also makes use of these fields to a lesser extent during our summer and fall seasons.”

Acton-Boxborough Pop Warner Football - submitted by league president Matt Lundberg.

“AB Pop Warner Football supports about 250 kids each season – 170 football players and 80 cheerleaders. Supporting anymore participation than this would require additional fields. We’ve held registration static for three years now, with a growing waiting list each year. We are pretty much restricted to 1 team per age group (5 total) given the field limitations in town. We’d like to expand to 7 teams – 1 each for the three older groups, 2 each for the two youngest. To do this we’d need more space, which I’ve discussed with

the Recreation Department in the past. My goal: identify and develop a multi-use field whose primary purpose is to support Youth Lacrosse in the spring and Pop Warner Football in the fall. Seasons are complementary, both programs are growing, and the field requirements are similar.”

Acton- Boxborough Youth Baseball - submitted by league president Mike Coppolino.

“Enrollment in AB Youth Baseball continues to grow. Over the past three years we’ve seen roughly an 8% increase per annum. Thanks to the Selectmen and Recreation Department the two new-lit fields at 2A/27 have helped considerably. With the addition of one Little League field in Boxborough coming on-line in 2003, we foresee the need for at most 2 additional Little League diamonds to satisfy our needs for the next 3-5 years. This would allow us to increase practice time and occasionally “rest” a field. Our needs are more urgent for a large ball field (90’ base paths) in that over the next 5 years, with construction at the high school and the consistent spring wetness at Jones field, we need at least one additional field as soon as possible, for those 13 and older.”

Handicapped Accessibility

The Section 504 Self-Evaluation, included in the Appendix, details our progress and plans with respect to making more of our conservation and recreation areas handicapped accessible. As an added benefit, handicapped accessible trails also improve accessibility for senior citizens and parents with very young children.

Section 8 – Objectives associated with Goal #3

3. Improve recreational opportunities

- a) Promote the development of the two regional bike trails planned to run through Acton.
- b) Enhance possibilities for hiking, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding, boating and fishing on conservation lands. Expand public outreach to better inform the public of our available passive recreation opportunities.
- c) Provide additional athletic fields to meet the needs of the town's growing population.
- d) Encourage regional planning with abutting towns in order to create more expansive human (see 3b above) and wildlife (see 2b above) corridors.
- e) Ensure handicapped accessibility is available for recreation activities (e.g. trails, picnicking, spectating at athletic fields, water-based recreation and camping) at both recreation and conservation areas.

Section 9 – Action Plan: Implement the Rec Dept 5-year plan (Action #14); ID sites for future athletic field development (Action #15)

	Implementation Timetable			Meets Objective Number:
	Accomplished as part of current plan	Within 2 years	Within 2 to 5 years	
<i>Action Recommendations</i>				
1. <i>Implement the Recreation Department's five-year plan to improve existing recreation facilities and develop new recreation sites and fields.</i>		x	x	3c, 3a, 3e
2. <i>Identify additional sites for future athletic field development.</i>		x	x	3c

Appendix L – Recreation 5-Year Plan
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(Not included with old Plan.)

Recreation 2006 Annual Report

The Recreation Department has undergone a number of changes in 2006, all contributing to its continued growth. The number of programs has increased from 9 programs in 1999 to 159 in 2006. Notable additions this year include Teen Repertory Theater, Floral Arts, Gardening, Jr. Chefs, Guest Chef Cooks, Kid's Music Classes, increased tennis and bus trip options, and more winter classes for children. With the continued population growth in Acton, the department looks forward to providing more safe and affordable programs.

Currently, the department manages 18 playing fields and 12 recreation areas. A number of field development projects are moving forward. The Recreation Department, supported by Acton-Boxborough Youth Baseball, Acton-Boxborough Youth Softball, and Acton Adult Softball League, acquired a Community Preservation Act grant in the amount of \$69,000 to fund the development of 10 additional leased acres at School Street Extension and Route 2 into two ball fields and a multi-purpose field. The project awaits a decision by the State of Massachusetts on the continuation of the 10-year lease agreement to proceed. Another field upgrade under consideration this year has been the updating of field lighting at the Elm St. ball field. A proposal to expand the placement of light fixtures to extend the playability of the multipurpose field, in addition to the softball field, is being finalized. This proposal incorporates strict adherence to town zoning bylaws which control light trespass and invisibility of lamps from the street and abutting properties.

Recreation Director Alison Trout resigned in May and gave birth to a healthy son. Expecting her next child in 2007, Allison looks forward to raising her children. Acton resident Cathy Fochtman replaced Alison. Cathy has been a supporter and instructor for Recreation, a leader in town organizations and volunteer for the schools. Maura Haberman has been promoted to Events Coordinator. Together, Cathy and Maura are working on planning 2008 programs and events by expanding collaboration with community groups and businesses.

NARA Beach opened for the season on Saturday May 27 and closed for the season on September 4. Beach memberships, both group and individual, numbered 283. Daily beach passes were frequently collected. Red Cross swimming lessons were offered to 117 participants. The NARA Summer Youth program opened on June 26 and ran for nine weeks through August 25. The programs were well attended with 825 paid weekly sessions, overseen by new on-site director Jonathan Grant. Jon is an Acton resident who works during the school year as a Physical Education instructor for the Town of Needham and brings many years of experience to the role.

The Summer Concert series was more successful than expected. Despite a rainy forecast, the Fourth of July at NARA was attended by 9,000-10,000 people who were entertained by the Lois Greco Band and a spectacular fireworks display. With a ticketed concert lineup of Livingston Taylor, Pink Voyd, The Drifters and The KISS 108 Concert featuring The Jonas Brothers and Corbin Bleu, the quality of the entertainment was superb. The reviews from those in attendance were overwhelming positive. Weather

related issues associated with an open air venue were more challenging than expected, as the Livingston Taylor concert was ultimately cancelled, and the Pink Voyd concert was moved to a rain date. Future plans for ticketed concert events are under consideration and we are looking for sponsors to lower ticket prices.

The Recreation Department has collaborated this fall with other town departments for grant opportunities. A \$5,900 grant from the Community Health Network Alliance Area 15 (CHNA 15) was recently awarded in December to underwrite "Wellness University", an informative educational event for those 55 years and older in March 2007, in partnership with Council on Aging, Health, and Nursing Services. Recreation is pursuing other grant opportunities and awaiting decisions in 2007.

The Recreation Commission continued its role of providing support and counsel to the Recreation Department, taking on the difficult issue of dog control in Recreational properties. The Commission recommended to the Board of Selectmen that a town-wide leash law be enacted. The selectmen have taken the recommendation under advisement.

The Recreation Department wishes to thank our supporters, who assist the department in carrying out our mission: "Building a sense of community through quality recreation." Thank you to the youth sports leagues and programs for their assistance in providing quality playing fields to local youth, with both funds and labor. We appreciate the continuing support of our major sponsors, including Gould's Plaza, Donalan's, Cambridge Savings Bank, Roche Brothers, Comcast, Domino's Pizza, Verizon, and many local businesses. Thank you to community organizations, including the Acton Garden Club and Acton Family Network, for their support of recreational spaces such as NARA and playgrounds. The Recreation Commission has our gratitude for their time and support: Ronald Schlegel, chairman; Michele Zaremba, co-chair; Alison E. Gallagher, Matthew Lundberg and Sasha C. O'Connell. Acton Recreation values the many volunteers that helped with special events and concerts. Our colleagues at Town Hall: Natural Resources, Municipal Properties, Police, Fire, Health, Highway and Civil Defense, have our thanks for their important contributions.

Recreation 2007 Annual Report

The Recreation Department reports a number of events in 2007 that contributed to its continued growth. Most notably, sports lighting replacement at the Elm Street ballfield was completed in August. The new Musco Lighting system provides safer illumination of playing fields, reduces undesirable lighting of neighboring properties and meets Town lighting bylaw requirements. A new dog leashing policy at NARA Park was established by the Board of Selectmen in March. In addition, recreational programs and events offered increased from 159 in 2006 to 171 in 2007. The Recreation Department offers a variety of programs for all ages. The department offered a Special Needs Soccer class for youth and found this to be an area of great need from parents in the community. The department will be offering more programs focusing on special needs. The debut of Acton Teen Repertory Theater was another notable addition to our offerings, performing free public performances of the musical "Bye, Bye, Birdie". With ongoing population growth in Acton, we look forward to developing more safe and affordable programs for people of all ages and abilities.

Currently, the department manages 18 playing fields and 12 recreation areas. Recreation Director, Cathy Fochtman, is researching "going green" with field turf management. The field in priority of repair is the School Street field. With a change in the state government office, the renewal of a long term lease contract at School Street was delayed and had not been finalized in 2007, therefore ballfield improvements, including the installation of two new baseball fields and the construction of parking, are on hold.

NARA Beach opened for the season on Saturday, May 26 and closed for the season on Monday, September 3. Beach memberships, both group and individual, numbered 309. Daily beach passes were frequently collected. Red Cross swimming lessons were offered to 143 participants by our WSI instructors. The NARA Summer Youth program opened on June 26 and ran for nine and one-half weeks through August 29. This year, one field trip was offered each week relating to the session theme. The programs were well attended with 890 paid weekly sessions, overseen by returning on-site director Jonathan Grant and assistant on-site director Amanda Johansson. Jon works during the school year as a Physical Education teacher for the Town of Needham and brings many years of experience to the role. Amanda is a graduate student at Springfield College, is seeking a secondary teaching career in science, and has a strong background in sports coaching.

The 2007 Summer Concert series was very successful with all events well attended, free and open to the public. The generosity of local businesses funding the summer events has been tremendous and we appreciate their support. Spectacular fireworks on July 4th and entertainment by the Help Wanted Band made this a very memorable holiday for all in attendance. Despite the dismal weather, there was still a crowd who braved the elements. There were so many great events over the summer, including the TJ O'Grady Skate Park Anniversary Event hosted by WAAF Street Team and the Eastern Boarder Street Team who performed demos for the kids. At NARA Park, the Air Force Band of Liberty, a swing band, performed a fabulous concert early in the summer which was very well received with attendees of all ages present. Our Family Fun Night was a huge hit

and was filled with a variety of activities including T-Bone, free ReMax Hot Air Balloon Rides, crafts, moon bounces and more. The Beach Party Blast was the biggest of all the summer concerts, with an estimated 4,000 in attendance, even bigger than our expectations. Local musicians "Second Story Band" braved uncertain weather for their loyal fans! The wonderful performance of the Vento Chiaro Woodwind Quintet rounded out a nice variety to the summer concert series. We had a new Fall Family Movie Night series, featuring free popcorn and games. Our spring and fall family campout nights are always a great hit and the focus of these campouts is family fun.

The Recreation Department is pursuing grant opportunities for shade structures at NARA Park. The Recreation Department received a substantial donation, requested to remain anonymous, for sound and lighting systems for the NARA Park Amphitheater.

The Recreation Commission continued its role of providing support and counsel to the Recreation Department, taking on the difficult issue of dog control in Recreational properties. The Recreation Commission has our gratitude for their time and support: Ronald Schlegel, chairman; Alison E. Gallagher, co-chair; Karen Jarsky, Frank Calore and John Benson.

The Recreation Department wishes to thank our supporters, who assist the department in carrying out our mission: "Building a sense of community through quality recreation." Thank you to the youth sports leagues and programs for their assistance in providing quality playing fields to local youth, with both funding and labor. Our Recreation Volunteer of the Year, Gerald McGavick, President of Acton Boxborough Pop Warner, has our continued gratitude for his dedication. We appreciate the continuing support of our major sponsors, including Gould's Plaza, Donalan's Supermarket, Cambridge Savings Bank, Roche Brothers, Comcast, Middlesex Savings Bank, Dunkin Donuts, Sorrento's Pizza, Worker's Credit Union, Verizon, and many local businesses. Thank you to community organizations, including the Acton Garden Club and Acton Family Network for their support of recreational spaces such as NARA and playgrounds.

Acton Recreation values the many volunteers that helped with special events and concerts. We also thank Beth Petr, Acton Family Network, Action Unlimited and the Acton Beacon for helping spread the word on the many events and programs we run. We also wish to recognize our colleagues at Town Hall: Natural Resources, Municipal Properties, Planning, Police, Fire, Health, Highway and Civil Defense, who have our thanks for their important contributions.

Date: 12/30/2008

Recreation 2008 Annual Report

Department:

Cathy Fochtman, Recreation Director

Maura Haberman, Events Coordinator/Administrative Assistant

Cheryl Getsick, Secretary

Commission:

Ronald Schlegel, Chairman

Karen Jarsky

Frank Calore

The Recreation Department broke new ground with many accomplishments in 2008. Recreation offers a variety of programs and activities for all ages. There were 120 classes and 20 bus trips in 2008. The Recreation Department organized and hosted 34 special events and concerts. All events were free admission and open to the public. There were tickets for seven theatrical shows offered in 2008. This year was comparable to 2007's total of 171 program offerings. New programs in 2008 included a variety of new tennis programs with extensive youth classes due to the high demand, assorted art classes including cartooning and drawing, special needs soccer and tennis, Boot Camp fitness class, early morning Tai Chi, Arboretum tours and the successful Woodlawn Cemetery Halloween Tour. Thank you to Billy Klauer and the Historical Society for putting together this fascinating and educational tour. We look forward to 2009's Cemetery tours! We would also like to thank Coach Jamie Norton for continuing our successful Start Smart Youth Sports Programs and to both Laura Sikalis and Lynda Lareau for continuing our popular Field Hockey programs. Acton Adult Softball League remains as popular as ever. Thank you to Rich Gottesman and Matt Murphy for all the hard work they do to keep this great community league running smoothly.

Acton Teen Repertory Theatre is a program that offers youth ages 8 – 18 years old the opportunity to participate in a full-scale musical production in which each participant is guaranteed a role in the cast. The program's highlights in 2008 were the January production of the musical *Grease* at the Gates Elementary School and the first-ever theater production at the NARA Park amphitheater of *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* in June. All productions were performed with free admission to the public to capacity crowds. Enrollment in this popular program expanded to 60 participants per production. The current production in progress since October is *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, and will have performances at R.J. Grey Junior High School in late January 2009. The Recreation Commission's Volunteer of the Year plaque was awarded to Carol Bradley, parent volunteer and producer of the 2008 Acton Teen Repertory Theater musicals.

The department manages 18 playing fields and 12 recreation areas. Recreation Director, Cathy Fochtman, is continuing to investigate "going green" with field turf management, and is enrolled in the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) Organic Land Care course in January, 2009. Our Natural Resources Department crew chief, Shawn O'Malley, recently attended Green School, a turf management certificate program offered through UMASS. A new long term lease at the School Street fields is being finalized at the end of 2008. The planning of ballfield improvements will be

evaluated early in 2009. Acton-Boxborough Youth leagues are meeting periodically with the Recreation Department to coordinate field maintenance plans and improvements for Acton fields.

NARA Beach opened for the season on Saturday, May 24 and closed for the season on Monday, September 1. Despite record rainfall during the summer of 2008, we managed and coordinated our programs to adjust to varying conditions. Beach memberships, both group and individual, numbered 347, as compared to 309 in 2007. Daily beach passes were frequently collected. Red Cross swimming lessons were offered by our WSI certified instructors. The NARA Youth and Mighty Mini Summer Program and our Counselor-In-Training (CIT) programs opened on June 23 and ran for nine and one-half weeks through August 27. A field trip was offered each week relating to the session theme, and included visits to the Museum of Science, Kimball's Farm, Canobie Lake Park, Brunswick Bowling and more. Various daily activities included swimming, boating, arts and crafts, music/drama, nature, and sports. The programs were well attended with 961 paid weekly sessions, as compared to 890 in 2007. The programs were overseen by returning on-site director Jonathan Grant and assistant on-site director Amanda Johansson.

NARA improvements that were approved by the Town this spring included a new fence enclosing the beach front to provide improved security and control of beach access for the beach staff; necessary electrical upgrades to the bath house snack bar; snack bar equipment; a storage room behind the amphitheater to house stage equipment and provide a ticket/snackbar booth and changing space for performers; tent and shade structures for use at events and the shelter of NARA Youth participants; routine maintenance of the amphitheater, including stain and paint application; park maintenance equipment; new portable recycled material lifeguard chairs; folding chairs for event use; and landscaping improvements at the amphitheater.

The 2008 Summer Concert Series and Special Events were very successful. Maura Haberman, Events Coordinator/Administrative Assistant put together the great lineup and sought funding for events from local area businesses. The July 4th concert and fireworks were one of the largest held to-date at NARA. Funding for the spectacular fireworks was donated by Donelan's Supermarket and Gould's Plaza and the United States Air Force Band of Liberty donated their fabulous concert to the community! The 2008 July 4th event was a very patriotic and memorable holiday for all in attendance. We were excited to host our first Dog Day Jubilee! What a great turnout with assorted dog games and competitions, dog products and ReMax Hot Air Balloon rides. True fun for the whole family! Other fabulous 2008 events included Acton Day. Comcast was our premier sponsor for the event and attendees were entertained with a huge variety of activities in the afternoon followed by a free admission concert performed by The Blushing Brides. Our 2nd annual Beach Party Blast was again a huge hit and was sponsored by Roche Brothers Supermarket. What fun for all ages! The event featured water fun activities, a concert by Hot Like Fire, and great BBQ! Our annual Winterfest event remains one of our most popular events at NARA Park. Winterfest was filled with lots of activities including firespinners, horse drawn wagon rides, snow games, sledding and more! The TJ O'Grady Skate Park 2nd Anniversary event was attended by many of Acton's youth who were entertained by various regional rock bands and taught skateboard tricks and techniques by Eastern Boarder Pros. Not only were these events hits but so were our Friday Family Movie Nights at NARA Park, Annual NARA Park Fishing Derby, Marionette Show, Treasure Hunt, and Monsterbash, which had equal

success. We once again supported the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life annual fundraiser at NARA Park, which was a success for the organization.

In response to demand for community garden plots, Acton Recreation added twenty-four new garden plots at Morrison Farm, located on Concord Road. This site supplements the 48 plots at the Community Gardens on Rt. 27 in North Acton. For 2009, an additional 12 plots will be added to the Morrison Farm site. We would like to thank the MCI-Concord Corrections Facility for providing manure for garden users.

The Recreation Commission continued its role of providing support and counsel to the Recreation Department and has our gratitude for their time and support: Ronald Schlegel, chairman; Karen Jarsky, and Frank Calore. We also wish to thank our outgoing members who completed their terms: Jon Benson and Alison Gallagher.

We extend our sincerest appreciation to these businesses for their continued support for all our events for the community. Thank you to: AAA Southern New England, AB Pop Warner, AB Youth Baseball, Acton Ford, Acton Medical, Acton Toyota, Ameriprise Financial, Be Well & Beyond, Benjarong Restaurant, Blue Hills Ski Area, Boston Red Sox, Butterbrook Organic Farm, Cambridge Savings Bank, Capelli Salon, CBC Fitness & Wellness Center, Citizen's Bank, Comcast, Community Phone Book, Concord Oil Company, Digital Credit Union, Domino's Pizza, Donelan's Supermarket, Dunkin Donuts, Eastern Boarder, EmbroidMe of Chelmsford, Especially for Pets, Gould's Plaza, Graham & Harsip, PC, Huntington Learning Center, LeLyonnais, Inc., Life Care Center of Acton, Lockes Pest Control, Maynard Outdoor Store, Middlesex Savings Bank, Nashoba Valley Ski Area, NE Patriot Cheerleaders, Pet Source, ReMax- Walden Landmark in Concord, Roche Brothers, Serafina Ristorante, Sorrento's Pizza, US Air Force Concert, Vincenzo's Ristorante and a private Acton Citizen for the wonderful concert performed by Quintessential Brass. Many of our events had both Dunkin Donuts and Acton Toyota onsite with freebies and sampling in addition to fiscal support. We thank them for their time and product donations. We also appreciate and thank the many dedicated volunteers who helped make our events run smoothly. Without the major contributions of both business and volunteers, these great community events would not be possible.

The Recreation Department wishes to thank our many supporters, who assist the department in carrying out our mission: "Building a sense of community through quality recreation." Thank you to the youth sports leagues and programs for their assistance in providing quality playing fields to local youth, with both funding and labor. We appreciate each monetary and product donation to help support all Town of Acton Recreation events and programs. Thank you to community organizations, including the Acton Garden Club and Acton Family Network for their support of recreational spaces such as NARA and playgrounds. We also would like to recognize and thank Jon Kerr, Director of Danny's Place and Shawn Widrick, Membership Administrator for Danny's Place, for all their support and dedication of time and labor we have received for many events and programs and helping to make the TJ O'Grady Skate Park event the huge success that it has become.

Acton Recreation values the support given by Beth Petr, Acton Family Network, Action Unlimited and the Acton Beacon for helping spread the word on the many events and programs we run. We also wish to recognize our colleagues at Town Hall: Natural Resources, Information Technology, Municipal Properties, Planning, Police, Fire, Health, Highway, and Civil Defense, who have our thanks for their important contributions.

RECREATION 2009 ANNUAL REPORT –

Welcome to the Town of Acton Recreation Department. The Department is comprised of two full-time employees, Cathy Fochtman, Recreation Director and Maura Haberman, Events Coordinator/Administrative Assistant, as well as one part-time secretary, Cheryl Getsick. The department manages 18 playing fields, two Community Gardens and 12 recreation areas. This year, Recreation offered over 175 recreation programs and events for all ages. The size and range of Recreation's offerings is diverse, in the hopes that all Acton citizens will find something to suit their taste. The Department offers a great variety of classes all year long from arts and crafts, landscape workshops, Start Smart Sports Programs, field hockey, conservation walks, swim lessons, and more. A brochure is published two times a year listing the upcoming schedule. We are pleased to provide a variety of programs, facilities, and services to meet your recreation needs.

As it was for all town departments, 2009 was a fiscally challenging year for the Recreation Department. Programs offered by Acton Recreation such as NARA Youth, sports/arts/music classes, NARA Beach, community gardens, bus trips and the Summer Concert Series are self-funded through enrollment fees and donations. Recreation's 15-hour per week secretary position is also funded by revolving fees. If programs have low enrollment or inadequate funding they are canceled. Similarly, donations are an essential component of the department's funding, and they allow larger events like Acton's July 4th Celebration to remain cost-free. Despite the economy and with careful planning, the Recreation Department succeeded in continuing to offer a large array of programs and special events in 2009.

NARA Park, the crown jewel of the department, features a picnic pavilion/snack bar/changing rooms building, a 500' beach with swimming pond, a 3,000 seat Amphitheater with dressing/concession/storage room, a playground, seven acres of sports fields including a softball field, and a one mile-paved walking perimeter. It is also home to the Recreation Department's NARA Youth and Mighty Mini Summer Program. NARA Beach opened for the season on Friday, May 22nd and closed for the season on Wednesday, August 26th. A total of 251 beach memberships (individual and family/group) were sold in 2009, and numerous day passes were sold each day. Red Cross swimming lessons were also conducted by certified staff. The NARA Summer Youth program, for ages 4-15, was delayed by one week because of a later-than-usual school closing date, but it ultimately ran for 8.5 weeks and served 351 session enrollments. Enrollment was down about 1/3 from the previous year, most likely due to the broader economic downturn and one missed session week. The onsite Program Director and Waterfront Director was Jennifer Andersen.

NARA Park was host to numerous free concerts and events throughout the year. The year kicked off well with a highly attended Winter Carnival. Perfect weather was the backdrop for Poi Fire Spinners, skating, cardboard sled races, tractor hay rides, and more. The summer weather was a challenge, with record setting rain and cloud cover falling on many of the summer event dates, but there were nevertheless many well-attended, well-received events. For example, this year's Summer Concert Series was themed "Tribute to the 60s," and included bands like Beatles for Sale, Scooby Snax Band, and 60s Invasion at our 4th annual Beach Party Blast sponsored by Roche Brothers Supermarket. The Series concluded with the 2nd annual Marionette Show.

In May, NARA once again hosted the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, an annual fundraising event. In June, Recreation assisted both the Acton Lions Club and Danny's Place with the relocation of the Acton Town Fair (formerly held on school grounds) to NARA Park. Danny's Juice Music Fest was held in conjunction with the fair to help draw more youth to both events. July 4th was estimated to have the largest turnout to-date with the best weather of the summer. NARA rocked with music from Facepaint and the Blushing Brides, "the world's most dangerous tribute to the music of the Rolling Stones." The fireworks were fabulous! Thank you to Donelan's Supermarket, Gould's Clothing, Cambridge Savings Bank, and Enterprise Savings Bank for their large fiscal donations to help fund this grand event!

In our continuing efforts to increase culturally diverse offerings, Acton Recreation hosted our first cultural special event, "Sri Lankan Day," which offered a great educational and cultural enrichment opportunity to attendees from Acton and the entire Boston area. It was extremely successful and was coordinated with members of the Sri Lankan Association of New England.

Activities included dancing, music, foods, educational booths, cultural traditions, games, and great décor. In September, Acton Day's new farmers/artisans theme drew a large number of participants eager to partake in the festivities, which included live music, artisans, farm produce and community groups. Despite the rain, those that braved the elements loved the new theme. And Monsterbash, the annual Halloween celebration, was held at the amphitheater with a large crowd of costumed youth dancing to a live band.

The NARA amphitheater received a new coat of paint and a wonderful improvement in the form of a changing room with attached snack bar. This serves the dual purpose of enticing more performers to come to our park while allowing the Recreation Department to supplement revenues with snack sales during performances. Recreation looks forward to working with theater and choral groups in the near future, as the NARA Amphitheater facilities have grown into a wonderful performance location. In keeping with our goal of growing the ways that NARA gets used, we are in the process of securing proposals for a picnic pavilion (CPC Funded Project) and continuing to market the park to broader audiences, like corporations looking for sites for picnics. NARA has been a host site for returning corporate outings such as IBM and Monster and continues to permit picnic areas all summer long, with the demand higher than we can accommodate. NARA even hosted its first formal wedding in 2009!

The Acton Recreation Department currently manages and permits 18 playing fields used by a host of leagues and teams including Acton Adult Softball, Pop Warner Football, Acton Boxborough Youth Soccer, Acton Boxborough Youth Baseball, Acton Boxborough Girls Youth Softball, and Acton Boxborough Youth Lacrosse. Field turf management is an ongoing priority and challenge for the Department for two related reasons: First, our town fields are heavily used and there is little chance for a "rest period," which is essential to the health of the turf. The School Street fields, in particular, are in need of repair, but our long term lease on these fields has been delayed and, as a result, upgrades and repairs are on hold. Second, a viable system for funding field maintenance needs to be devised – one that places the responsibility equitably on the shoulders of our field users. In 2009, the Recreation Department explored possible funding models with the heaviest users, and will continue these conversations in 2010. Moreover, environmentally friendly field maintenance options will be explored.

In addition to our playing fields, the Recreation Department manages 12 recreation areas including six playgrounds and the TJ O'Grady Skate Park. Playground maintenance and

upgrades have been a heavy focus for the Department in 2009. We recently completed a Playground Needs Assessment to determine the facilities with the most significant issues. The site on Elm Street (for which we have received CPC funding that is currently on hold while legal issues related to CPC funding in general are settled) is at the top of the list, as is Goward Playground (behind Acton Memorial Library). Some funding was available for moderate improvements to Goward, and the Department was fortunate to have the assistance of ABRHS seniors on Senior Work Day to implement them. All of the playgrounds have been assessed for safety, accessibility, and age appropriateness, and in 2010 the Department will seek funding to continue making necessary repairs and improvements. The TJ O'Grady skateboarding park continues to be well-used and popular with Acton residents; we have had some problems with misuse of the parking lot, as well as with graffiti and vandalism on the site, but the Recreation Department is actively working with the Acton Police Department to ensure that it remains a safe and appealing destination for our youth.

Elsewhere around town, the Acton Teen Repertory Theater performed its final production – Thoroughly Modern Millie – at the Junior High School. (The theater program is now privately run.) The Recreation Department continues to work with other town departments to develop the Morrison Farm site. The community gardens program at the Farm has been very well received, and the initial number of plots available has been expanded to 36. It is also home to four additional plots: a children's garden, a native plant garden, community perennials, and a community corn plot. The Morrison Farm site is permitted only for organic gardening. And finally, the Recreation Department has been an active member in several health and wellness initiatives in the community: Recreation is a board member of Acton-Boxborough Coalition for Healthy Youth (ABCHY) and a member of the Health Outreach Planning Essentials (H.O.P.E.) Steering Committee.

The Recreation Commission has undergone changes in 2009. Most notably, long-time member and Chair of the commission, Ron Schlegel, stepped down. The Department and Commission are most grateful to him for his many years of service to Acton's recreation community. At the time of writing, the Commission has one opening for a full member and two openings for associate members.

The Town is very appreciative to the wonderful businesses that made all the community events possible and the many volunteer who made them successful! Your help and support is the vehicle to success for all events. Thank you!

The total in fiscal donations received for 2009 events was \$35,025
The total of product donations received for 2009 events was \$15,911

Acton Day Donations: Cambridge Savings Bank, Comcast, Dunkin Donuts, Enterprise Savings Bank, Life Care Center of Acton, Pop Warner

Summer Concert Series Donations: Especially for Pets, AAA Southern New England, Acton Dental Associates, Acton Medical Associates, Acton Citizen (Anonymous), Acton Pediatric Dental, Adesa Concord, Barron Chiropractic, Boxborough Acupuncture, Dunkin Donuts, Enterprise Savings Bank Especially for Pets, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, Holiday Inn Boxborough, James V. Tabner, Esq., Kitchen Outfitters, Legends Sporting Goods, Litchfield Plastering, Locke's Pest Control, Petco, Middlesex Savings Bank, Nashoba Family Dentist, Onyx

Transportation, Perry Plumbing, Roche Brothers, Ruth Lull, PhD, Stonefield Farm & Greenhouses, Six Flags NE, Stop n' Shop Acton, Teamworks, USAF Band-Afterburner, Wayside Inn, Wetherbee Plaza

July 4th: Acton Toyota, Cambridge Savings Bank, Donelan's Supermarket, Enterprise Savings Bank, Dunkin Donuts, Gould's Clothing

Monsterbash: 421 Gas Inc. (Sunoco), Benjarong, Donelan's Supermarket, Nashoba Valley Ski Area, Papa Gino's, Roche Brothers Supermarket

TJ O'Grady Skate Park Anniversary Event: Salerno's Pizza (Sorrento's), Acton Toyota of Littleton

Winter Carnival 2009: Boxborough Youth Baseball, Boston Bruins, Boston Red Sox, Cambridge Savings Bank, Dunkin' Donuts, Life Care Center of Acton, Middlesex Savings Bank, Stop & Shop

Recreation would also like to thank Beth Petr (Community E-news), Acton Family Network, Action Unlimited, Acton Boxborough Elementary Schools, Acton Beacon, Council on Aging, First Connections, Acton Memorial Library, and Danny's Place for helping spread the word on the many events and programs we run. We also like to recognize our colleagues at Town Hall: Natural Resources, Municipal Properties, Police, Fire, Health, Highway and Civil Defense have our thanks for their important contributions.

Section 5B3 – Athletic Fields and Town Playgrounds

3. Athletic Fields and Town Playgrounds

Athletic Fields

The Town of Acton provides approximately 29 acres of town-owned athletic fields, in addition to the facilities provided by the local and regional schools that are frequently used for non-school activities. The location, sizes, and most common uses of these fields are shown below. Most areas are suited for a variety of athletic uses, with some areas capable of supporting multiple simultaneous uses. Recreation needs for more athletic fields are discussed in detail in Section 7B. The Recreation Department's comprehensive five-year plan is presented in Section 9.

Ref. #	Field Name	Acreage	Playground	Field Uses
1.	Jones Field	3	Yes	Baseball/Soccer
2.	Woodlawn Field	2	No	Soccer
3.	Hart Field	2	No	Baseball
4.	MacPherson	1	No	Baseball
5.	Great Hill	2.5	Yes No	Soccer
6.	Elm Street Field	2	Yes	Softball/Football/Tennis/Soccer
7.	2A/27	2	Yes	2 Baseball
8.	School Street	4	No	3 Soccer
9.	Little Great Hill Field	.5	No	Soccer
10.	Goward Field (behind the Library)	1.69	Yes	None
11.	Gardner Field	1.6	Yes	Field closed in 2000 due to lack of parking
12.	NARA	6.5	No Yes	Softball/3 Soccer
	Total Acreage	28.79		

To add: 13. To O'Grady State Park 14. Robbins Mill Recreation Area

Maintenance of the town athletic fields is the responsibility of the Recreation/Natural Resources Department. Field scheduling is the responsibility of the Recreation Department. In 1999, the town reinstated routine trash removal at the fields. The town provides weekly mowing for the athletic fields and annual aeration. Fields are fertilized using funds accumulated from field reservations or donations from the leagues.

In addition to the athletic league use of fields, many community groups and companies reserve the athletic areas for games and picnics. Athletic fields, and their associated picnic and playground areas, are also intensively used by families and groups of children.

Overview of Field Problems

Jones Field and Great Hill Field are often too wet in the spring to be playable. In 2000 ~~Gardner field was taken offline due to parking issues~~ ~~Gardner~~, Hart, MacPherson and Little Great Hill fields are all limited in their utility due to their size and geometry. In each case, only certain levels of play are possible. The difficulty of parking near some of the fields makes them less desirable for their targeted age groups as the very young players are required to walk on the side of, or across, busy town streets.

outside
renders to

Due to budget restraints, maintenance of athletic fields has become a problem. ~~The town~~ ~~has limited lining of athletic fields, and in recent years the leagues have had to provide their own silt or stone mix and amenities.~~ Youth Soccer also frequently re-sods worn areas of fields. The leagues that use our illuminated fields at Elm Street and 2A/27 provide their own funding for lights.

Field Descriptions

1. JONES FIELD

The focus on Jones Field during the past five years has been to address safety issues. To that end, in 1999, the Recreation Department placed a large safety net between the ball field and playground area to prevent balls hitting children while they are using the play structures. In addition, infield improvements have been made and new bleachers installed to replace the ones that did not meet safety codes.

- Netting replaced in 2010.
- ABYB infield improvements

2. WOODLAWN FIELD

Woodlawn Field ~~is~~ ^{was} leased under a ten-year agreement (due to expire in 2002) from the Cemetery Commission, and eventually will be used for burial purposes.

The lease was renewed in 2008 for 5 years, to be reviewed in Oct 2012.

This field has undergone some turf maintenance over the past five years in an effort to produce a more stable playing surface. Installation of an irrigation system and resodding of high traffic areas has produced a field that can withstand the daily demands placed upon it. In recent winters the Recreation Department has created two large skating rinks on the field.

~~Winter skating rinks on the field were discontinued in 2008, due to maintenance issue~~

3. HART FIELD

During the past five years routine maintenance has taken place at Hart Field.

4. MACPHERSON FIELD

Routine maintenance has been the focus at this field during the past 5 years. In 2001 an emergency call box was placed at this field and major improvements to the roadway leading to the field have been completed. This has allowed for better access to the field for vehicles and pedestrian traffic.

MacPherson received two new dugouts in May 2008, with the ~~ess~~ support of ABYB and a grant from the Melanoma Foundation. who lead the construction effort with Town support

5. GREAT HILL FIELD AND #9. LITTLE GREAT HILL FIELD

In the past five years the Recreation Department has brought Little Great Hill online and completed a boardwalk connecting this field to the parking lot. Field use was studied and a determination was made to eliminate the Little League field and increase the soccer field area at the Great Hill site. In addition the parking lot was resurfaced.

Routine maintenance, Dog iss

6. ELM STREET FIELD

Elm Street Field has undergone a major renovation project during the past five years.

The playground has been repaired, wood safety fiber surfacing has been added and dangerous equipment has either been replaced or removed. The playground was also reoriented to the site to accommodate the addition of a small size soccer field. The tennis court area has been completely redone, including new fencing, court surfacing, new nets and a new practice backboard. The softball field has seen the replacement of backstop and player fencing areas. In addition new bleachers were provided as well as permanent team benches. Some electrical work was also done at this site to ensure the safe use of the field lights.

Funded by 75K Town, 40K Meet, 40K Pop, 40K Rec. Also, field lighting upgrade in 2007, with design following Town bylaws. (see Annual Report 2006 for verbiage) Dog Infield upgrades by AASL, removal of aging outfield fence, which was not replaced. Playground status to routine maintenance items

7. 2A/27 - VETERANS MEMORIAL FIELD

During the past five years the field at 2A/27 has undergone a dramatic renovation process. What once was a soccer/little league field has now turned into a fabulous double Little League complex complete with our own "Green Monster". The renovation of this field included the addition of two Little League fields, lighting, scoreboards, fencing, starting up the irrigation system, seating areas and handicapped access. The space is now a highly utilized area.

Many amenities have been funded by ABYP, - fencing replaced by ABYP. Infield improvements, scoreboard caps were and funded replacement.

8. SCHOOL STREET

This site contains a heavily used soccer field, although in the past five years little has been done to maintain the field, as the site is under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Corrections System. This field is on a ten-year lease from the Department of Corrections, in return for that agency's use of 25 acres of the Wetherbee Conservation Land. These fields are difficult to keep in playable condition because the soil is sandy with a gravel base and does not retain water. The proximity of the fields to Acton Water District wells (at 315 School Street and Lawsbrook Road) and an aeration tower restricts the Town or the sports leagues from irrigating the fields. The fields must be "rested" as much as field demand allows in order to retain a minimum amount of vegetation.

A 2006 CPA plan to construct a parking lot and two ball fields was put on hold due to the State's decision to replace ~~discontinue~~ the 10-year lease with an annual lease. At the conclusion of ~~2007~~, the multi-year lease option was ~~reinstated~~ by the state.

10. GOWARD PLAYGROUND

In 1993 the Acton Children's Playground Committee, Inc., a citizen's group, successfully raised funds and used town and citizen labor to create a playground geared for ages 1-6 at In late 2010 the recreational opportunities for young children." In 1999, surfacing upgrades were made at this playground to improve handicapped access and increase safety.

In the hands of DCAM and await their approval

2008

with ~~reinstatement~~

In the last five years, many renovations have been made to the playground at Goward Field, due in large part, to the library renovation project. In the past five years attempts have been made to provide better handicap access to the play equipment. In addition safety issues concerning outdated equipment and fall zones have been addressed and resolved. The basketball court has also been improved to provide a small play area.

11. GARDNER PLAYGROUND

Over the past five years attempts have been made to improve the access to this neighborhood playground. Due to the popularity of this playground, access issues have become paramount. To address some of the parking concerns, all soccer games and practices were restricted from this field two years ago. In 2001 two new play structures were installed complete with handicapped accessible wood safety fiber surfacing.

12. NARA FIELDS

Refer to Section 5B5 for a detailed description of all of the amenities at NARA Park. In 1999 the NARA Park fields were brought online. The 6.5 acres of fields contain one softball diamond and two full size soccer fields. Two 500-foot deep bedrock wells were drilled to provide field irrigation. A controlled fertilizer program is used to mitigate fertilizer contamination of the pond and wetlands.

Routine Maintenance.

The NARA fields are used quite extensively. On any given Saturday, the two soccer fields are broken down into five or six play areas in order to allow multiple teams to practice simultaneously. The Acton Boxborough Regional High School cross country program also uses the fields in the fall of each year.